

February 17, 2022

Chairpersons Elliot and Slap, Vice Chairs Flexer and Turco, Ranking Members Haines and Witkos, and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. No. 5034.

My name is Ruben Felipe, I'm a resident of Stratford, and I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut Charter Schools Association. We represent the 11,000 mostly low-income, minority kids attending Connecticut's 21 public charter schools in 10 cities and towns as well as the 6,000 names currently on waitlists for public charter schools across the state.

I want to express my strong support for H.B. No. 5034: 'An Act Concerning Prohibiting an Institution of Higher Education from Considering Legacy Preferences in the Admissions Process,' and urge you to vote in favor of this critical legislation.

This bill is important to me because I believe every Connecticut student should have an equal opportunity to be admitted to a college based on their accomplishments and pursue their dreams. Legacy preference policies prevent college access for kids like the mostly low-income students of color who attend public charter schools.

As a father of four, who has sent three children through our state's most under-resourced public education system, I fight every day for educational equity. When public and private institutions of higher education use legacy preferences during admissions decisions, they perpetuate an outdated and inequitable system that was designed to advantage the privileged of our state—the least diverse and most resourced candidates. Please vote in favor of H.B. No. 5034.

We have a moral and constitutional obligation to provide our most in-need children with the educational opportunities many of us are privileged enough to take for granted.

Thank you for your time and your work on behalf of Connecticut citizens.

Ruben Felipe
Executive Director
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